

Let's open our Bibles this evening to Revelation 5:6 as we continue - got a lot to look at tonight, have communion as well, so we'd like to get started.

John was in his 90's. The 1st century was coming to an end. The church now had its third generation of Christians gathering together to worship when John was exiled by a wicked emperor for his faith, and he was exiled to an island where, in his 90's, God visited him and gave him this vision that we call "*The Revelation of Jesus Christ.*"

It is, for all intents and purposes, the fulfillment of everything that the Lord had spoken - everything that He had promised to the nation, to the individuals, to the tribes, to the church. Nothing is left undone by the time we get to the end of this book. For the church, chapter 3 ends your present-day experience. Everything else that we were studying beginning in chapter 4 is future, and it is all good for you and me. Not so good for the world. And so I think the Lord gives us insight so that we might be more than ever motivated to share our faith because what is waiting for the unbeliever is horrifying.

In chapter 1:19 the Lord, in speaking to John and making Himself known to him, tells John to write down the things that he has seen, and he had a vision of the Lord in His glory, of Jesus in all of His authority and power. Then he was to write down the things that were, the Church Age, which covered chapters 2 and 3. And then to write down the things that would come hereafter. Chapter 4:1 is the rapture of the church. You are gathered into the clouds where the Lord is and taken to heaven. Chapters 4 and 5 are really just that - the church in heaven - and we get to see what is going on around God's throne and what we can look forward to. Beginning in chapter 6 - and we will begin there next week, in fact we're only going to look at two verses next week - I'd like to give you an overview next week of a chronological look at the Great Tribulation. In other words, what do we know about that seven-year period, and in what order does it present itself? So that by the time we start, then, the next week, we'll be able to pick up the pace, but you'll have a scenario, a scene in your mind as to what we're going to be looking at.

In chapter 4, when we began a few weeks ago, we were given a view of the throne of God. We learned that the church is represented by the twenty-four elders. We saw and met four living creatures, sometimes called seraphim, sometimes called cherubim; just depends if you read about them in Ezekiel 1 and 10 or Isaiah 6. We are called, as the church, to worship. We've talked a lot about the glass sea in front of the throne of God. If you haven't been with us, all of the studies are available in the archives. We'll just encourage you go to look at them and to learn from them.

As we began chapter 5 last week, we spent the evening last Wednesday talking about this scroll that John saw in the hands of the Father - what it meant; the title deed to the earth, what it meant in terms of the Lord coming to gather together the possession that He had purchased - the title deed that was forfeited by man to Satan through obedience to him, disobedience to God. The prince of the power of the air seemed to be winning. John heard the angel cry out, "Who's worthy to take the scroll and open its seals?" and no one came forward. And so John wept.

We read in verse 1 of chapter 5, "And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, 'Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?' And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. But one of the elders said to me, "Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.' " It's going to be an awesome time when we're in heaven to see this take place. It is still future for us. But at least we get to, in two chapters, stand about and watch the worship and honor that the Lord gets; it's kind of the goosebump part of the book of Revelation. The rest of it is pretty terrifying, actually, until we get to the Lord's return.

At this point, before we look at our verses tonight, we'd like to continue down through the end of chapter 5, I wanted to remind you - if you haven't thought about it - about two very important Old Testament practices that should be clearly understood. One is the law of the levirate, and one is the law of the kinsman-redeemer. They both reflect on what Jesus has done to be sure that you and I can be saved.

In the first, the kinsman-redeemer, sometimes called the "*goel*" in Hebrew, addressed the issue of redeeming properties that were forced to be foreclosed upon due to lack of payment or even sold because of debt and the ability that was built into the law for a Jewish family to buy back or to redeem or to take back the land that God had given to them when they were assigned the land under the Old Testament law and dispensation. The LORD wanted the land to stay in the families. But it didn't always work out. And so there would be someone that was specific to the family that would be allowed (according to Leviticus 25 and other places) to redeem, and the purchaser, the forecloser, would have to relinquish that land when all of the conditions were met; even to point of there being one year every fifty years - the Year of Jubilee - where that land had to be forfeited back to its original owner whether they had paid for it or not because God wanted to be sure that His people stayed with the land that He gave them. But throughout the Old Testament, that word "redeem" is the word "*goel*." It literally means someone who is in a position to buy back that which at one point rightfully belonged to you, but you've forfeited it, you've lost it, you were in debt because of it, and you weren't able to gather it to yourself. It was designed by the LORD, like I said, to keep the Land of Promise in the hands of His people. The spiritual picture, certainly, and the fulfillment of it, is found in Jesus as being our "*Goel*." We had life once, but we lost it to sin, to disobedience. We're not able to save ourselves, and yet the LORD sent His Son so that He might purchase us from the law, from the judgment that sin is under and the bondage that it brings, by His own blood. The redemption responsibility for the "*goel*" fell upon the next of kin. So Jesus is our next of kin in the sense that He is fully God, but He took a flesh. He's the only One closest to us who hasn't sinned, who can pay the price, and so He took a body, He becomes our "*Goel*." In fact, in the New Testament, you will constantly read the word "redemption." It's the same word. Jesus is our Redeemer.

The other law, the law of the levirate marriage, is found in Deuteronomy 25. But it was very specifically applied. If a man or a brother had an older brother who got married and didn't have any children and died, the next in line, brother-wise, was obligated by the law to take his brother's wife, have children with her, and name that first son that was born in the name of his brother so that the name of that family would not disappear from the earth. Apparently the older brother had valid excuses sometimes to refuse. For example, maybe he was already married, already had children, and so he really couldn't honorably carry out that responsibility. If that was the case, then the obligation passed on to the next younger brother and so on and so forth. If the refusal was for dishonorable reasons - the guy just

didn't like her, didn't want to be around, didn't want the obligation - he was seen to be in disobedience to the LORD. It was a disgrace to the family, and, in fact, his refusal for dishonorable reasons would allow the widow, the rejected woman, to gather by the elders at the gate of the city and spit in the guy's face and then give him a demeaning epitaph. She would call him one who had "his shoe loosed" or "his sandals removed." You can read *Genesis 38* for the application, if you will.

Those both laws of God - both of them together - were given by the LORD in His mercy and His kindness. They were never mandated together in the Scriptures although in practice, as in the book of Ruth let's say, when they could both be applied, they were expected to be fulfilled. The law of the levirate was only mandated to the elder brother or the next brother. The law of the "*goel*" was optional, so you could take it or leave it if you wanted to. But I think one of the best examples that you can find of the practice is in the book of Ruth. You know the story that Naomi and her husband, Elimelech, lived in Bethlehem when they encountered a terrible famine. But rather than staying where the LORD was, he packed up his family, he moved to Moab with two of his very sick children. They were both sick, I think, going in. One was called Mahlon; it means sickly. One was called Chilion; it means pining away. Not exactly your robust children. The kids in Moab married women there from Moab - Ruth, one, Orpah, the other. Over time, Elimelech, her husband, died. So did both of her boys. It left Naomi by herself with two daughters-in-law, and she realized that she, at least in part, was in the wrong place, and she began to repent. "God, I should have stayed home. I should have been where you wanted me all along. I ran away from the suffering, but I ran away from the land that you gave to us." She told her daughters-in-law to go back to their people. "I've got nothing for you in Israel. You won't be well accepted there. It'll be a tough place for you to survive. Go find husbands." And Orpah did go back, but Ruth was convinced at this point, from her mom, that the God that Naomi served was the true God. And she said, "Wherever you go, I'm going. I'm going with you." So she heads back to Bethlehem, and, as she returns back there, she has to go to work just to survive. She goes out as a laborer in the field - a day laborer, as a gleaner - and it just so happens that she ends up in the fields of a fellow named Boaz who turns out would be her "*goel*," her husband and her father-in-law's nearest relative or so they thought. And so she began to work there, and needless to say, Boaz had a liking for Ruth as well, you know, a twinkle in his eye. And as the time went on and the story unfolded, Ruth comes by faith to Boaz to make herself available, "If you could just redeem me, you're my redeemer" (a type of Christ). And Boaz is in a position where he's a wealthy guy. He doesn't need

another field to be bought, but he wants to buy the field so that he can have the treasure that's in it. And so he says to her, "Well, there's someone actually closer than me, but the field is available, the land of your family; but you're also available." And so he took it to the guy in the rightful spot, and the guy said, "Well, I'd be happy to take the land, but I can't redeem the woman. I'm married, I have a family." And Boaz said, "Well, I'd like to do both!" And he said, "Well, then you go ahead and take both." And so he redeemed the field because he loved Ruth, and he, just like Jesus took flesh and came to fully redeem us, stepped up. He became the kinsman-redeemer.

John, here in the heavenly scene, begins to weep because there's no redeemer, there's no *"goel."* "Who's going to save us? Who's going to deliver us?" The world is in the clutches of sin and the enemy. John is in his 90's, exiled to die somewhere for his faith. "If there's no redeemer, where can I look?" And so as he wept, it was one of the elders that represents the church pointing John to look around because there was One who could be their Savior, who would take the title deed of the earth, who has purchased the world for the treasure therein, and He is going to be worshipped by all. It's going to be quite a moment, I think, when you're there.

And John said, verse 6, "And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne."

John has been here a while (if you just read through since chapter 4:1), and I wonder - how come he never saw Jesus? He doesn't make any mention of Him at all. How could he have missed Him? And then I thought, "Well, we do that." We go to church, meet friends, sit together, make plans, sing along, study our Bibles, laugh, leave, miss Jesus. John's focus was drawn to the things that, certainly, God wanted him to see.

But notice this time, here, that in the midst of the throne, as one of the elders encouraged John to look - the word "behold" is a great Greek word, it means look at this unusual thing or check this out, if you will. Take a look. And he looks around, and he sees Jesus standing in the midst of the throne, in the midst of these four living creatures, in the midst of the church, the elders. Every eye now

is turned to Him. In Hebrews 1:3 we read that Jesus was "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high." And that's where we find him. Accomplished His work, He now stands to accept, if you will, that which He has purchased; to claim what rightfully belongs to Him. He sat down. If you read Acts 7 - the ministry of Stephen as he gives that really long and powerful sermon that gets him killed - as he is being killed for his faith, stoned to death, you will read that in heaven Jesus stands up to greet this first martyr. He sat down saying the work was finished; He stood up to receive this man who has given his life to serve the Lord (there in Acts 7). Here again Jesus comes to His feet, but this time it is to act in judgment. Remember, this is the end of everything now. The time has come to exercise His power and His right. Hebrews 2:8 talks about everything being under His feet, everything in subjection to Him. Nothing that is available is not in subjection to Him. And then Paul writes, "But we don't yet see everything under His feet just yet." But now we will. Because this is that time that the Bible has looked forward to. The Lord now stands up, sticks out His hand, takes the scroll. And it's all about Jesus and His judgment and His return now. He will rule and reign, and you with Him.

So John looks around, and notice from his description that this is not the Jesus that you remember from the gospels. It's not Jesus meek-and-mild. It's not the little baby lying in the manger. It's not the suffering Jesus, spit upon and mocked, hanging on a cross, put in a grave. He's a Lion who stands with the authority to fully assert His will. And yet when John looks, he first sees the Lamb, the One who had come to take upon Himself the sins of the world. It's an interesting word. This word "Lamb" is the Greek word "*arnion*," which literally means little lamb or baby lamb. You might remember that at the Passover (Exodus 12) one of the practices that the LORD asked for the Jewish families to practice was that the lamb would be chosen for the sacrifice and would first reside in the home with the family for four days; number one - to be sure it had no spot or blemish, but then there was this issue of this little lamb was now part of the family. The sacrifice now becomes to be understood, and so there was a great personal cost there as the sacrifice was made. So Jesus had dwelt amongst us. He had no fault found in Him. Those who walked with Him wept as He died. Nobody realized He was going to be the Lamb of God that took away the sins of the world. But now look - John turns around to look for a Lion, and he sees a Lamb. It's interesting. The Lion of Israel - which they had longed for - the One who would rule and reign, was none other than

the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, the One who had been slain, who didn't open His mouth before His shearers is dumb. He suffered and died. He brought victory through the sacrifice. There are lots of pictures in the Old Testament of the lamb as the sacrifice. There are only very few direct references in the New Testament to Jesus being the Lamb of God. In fact, if you go through the gospels and the epistles, there are exactly four. John 1:29, "The next day John" (the Baptist) "saw Jesus coming toward him," pointed Him out, "and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!' " Eight verses later, "And looking at Jesus as he walked," (and it was several weeks later) "he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' " (John 1:36). In Acts 8, when Philip is speaking to the eunuch, remember, there in the wilderness that the Lord had driven him out to speak to (and he didn't know that this appointment was made for him), he pulled up next to the chariot of this eunuch going home to Ethiopia. He was reading out of Isaiah 53, "He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and as a lamb before its shearer is silent, so He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, and who will declare His generation?" And Philip said, "Do you know what you're reading?" and he said, "I have no idea!" "Well who are you reading about?" "I don't know!" "Would you like me to help you?" "Yes!" And he got in the chariot and, from that very moment, began to preach Jesus to him, and eventually he came to know the Lord. So besides John 1 (those two verses) and then two mentions of Him being the Lamb of God in that little discussion between Philip and the eunuch, there is really no mention at all other than 1 Peter 1:19 which tells us that we've been saved "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Those are the only four references in the New Testament to Jesus being the Lamb of God; that is until you get to the book of Revelation, where there are twenty-eight direct references to the very thing: He's the Lamb of God, He's the Lamb of God, He was the Lamb of God. Beginning here.

Look at chapter 6 for a minute, verse 16, where they cry to the mountains and the rocks (the men upon the earth, the ones who are unbelievers, who've been left behind), " 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?' " Though Jesus will rule as a Lion, He will continually be honored and glorified in heaven as the Lamb that was slain. What we're doing tonight in communion will continue for eternity. We will recognize the Lord's sacrifice.

When Isaac asked his father, Abraham, "We've got the fire, we've got the wood, where's the sacrifice?" there in Genesis 22, it was Abraham who said to his son,

Isaac, "My son, God will provide for Himself the lamb as a burnt offering." And so they went together. Well, what Abraham promised, Jesus becomes the answer for. He was the Lamb that was slain. And in heaven, as we mentioned last week, the only thing from the earth that you will see there are the scars of Jesus. It is in Zechariah 13:6 where the prophet says to Him, "What are these wounds between your arms?" And it says, "Then He will answer, 'Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends.' " The wounds we'll still see. John writes, in chapter 19:37 (about Jesus), "And again another Scripture says, 'They shall look on Him whom they pierced.' " So, the only manmade thing in heaven is going to be the scars that Jesus bears. So we're always going to see Him as the sacrifice though He is going to rule like a Lion.

In fact, if you go a little deeper, verse 6, "the Lamb as though it had been slain," the word for "slain" there is the strongest Greek word for butcher. It doesn't mean He just got killed; it means He was brutally murdered. It is in the perfect tense which means there was a past action that has a corresponding result in the present tense. That's really what the present perfect tense means: something happened in the past, it has ongoing effects in the present. So to this day - in fact till right now - His death can bring life to those who look to Him. The sacrifice continues to bear fruit. Yet now this little Lamb will arise as a Lion to defeat the enemies of God, to claim rightful ownership of all that He has created as Almighty God, to bring judgment to an unbelieving world that will now meet the wrath of God. Where will you be? In heaven, worshipping the Lord, agreeing with Him.

"Seven horns" we read. Animals certainly defend themselves with horns. The Hebrews used that term to signify authority or the power to govern. In fact if you read, in the Old Testament especially, the word "horns" is applied both to individuals and to nations when it comes to their power. I would point you to Daniel chapters 7 and 8 where it is used extensively as examples of kingdoms that came and went, but while they were here, they were powerful until they were overthrown.

As we talked to you about the number seven, back in chapters 2 and 3, seven is the number of completeness or perfection or totality, if you will. So the Lord's power is complete. Nothing is going to stand in His way or resist Him. The seven eyes are explained to us in the passage. They are the seven spirits of God that God sent out into all of the earth. So we have the same phrasing if you go to chapter 4:10 of Zechariah, where he will say, "For who has despised the day of small things? For

these seven rejoice to see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel." And it says, "They are the eyes of the LORD, which scan to and fro throughout the whole earth." So it is that same phraseology where it says that the Holy Spirit sees all, knows all, has been sent by the Lord into the world. And now, as a perfect Judge, Jesus will be able to judge correctly because He knows everything. He's seen everything. He understands everything.

So, verse 7, "He came." Jesus the Lamb, Jesus the Lion, steps forward to take the scroll from the Father's hand, fulfilling, by the way, what Daniel had written in 550 B.C., Daniel 7 (verses 13-14), Daniel's vision. He wrote this, "I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed." What a day! John immediately stops crying. "All right. I get it. The Lord is here." And he rather begins to worship.

I think from a technical standpoint, if you will, that this is probably the most pivotal moment in history; I think second only to the cross and to the resurrection. Right? Because there the Lord saved us, delivered us, overcame death for us. Here the Lamb who becomes the Lion - all of the suffering that creation has had to endure, all of the disinheritance that the saints have had to endure, waiting for the Lord, we've been crying out, "Lord, come!" For six thousand years and longer now, the believers have been looking to the Lord. And yet here, at this time, He takes the scroll. He marks the initiation of converting its contents to reality. Right? This has all been waiting. This has all been laid aside. This has all had a timestamp to it. But now it's about over. Right? Now, within just a few years, all of this is going to be accomplished. And so He's going to usher in the promised kingdom. He's going to fulfill every word that's been spoken, every promise that's been left unfulfilled. And as age upon age of people dying, and murder and disease and sin, countless bones piled up on the earth, God patiently waiting. Waited for that one last soul to come. Even since the cross where the cost of sin was paid, justice slept by the grace of God. But now that's about done. Jesus now steps forward, and all that God is about to be redeemed from Satan's hand and taken from his grasp, this is going to be an everlasting dominion. In fact, you will read about five chapters from now, or six, in chapter 11:15 of Revelation, "Then the seventh angel sounded: and there were loud voices in heaven, saying, 'The kingdoms

of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!" This is what we're waiting for, guys. This is what we want. Forget about who you voted for. We need Jesus to come and rule. And everything will be made just right.

So verse 8 tells us, "Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying: 'You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.' "

The cherubim or the seraphim (they are called two different things), these angelic created beings, call for worship a lot. We've seen it a couple of times already. And we've also seen the church hittin' the deck a lot. Apparently we're going to do a lot of singin'. I hope you're lookin' forward to that. The word "harp" here is an interesting word because you can't really tie it to an instrument. So some kind of heavenly instrument being played for worship, probably by these angels, I would think. But in the hands of the saints were golden bowls filled with incense on top of hot coals which let a sweet-smelling savor or fragrance permeate heaven, and we're told that they were the prayers of the saints. David would write in Psalm 141:2, "Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." Everything we've been praying for. Every time you said, "Come, Lord Jesus. Just come, Lord. We can't wait for You to come. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done." All of those will be showing up that day because now it's all about to get answered at once. All the cries of God's people for all of those years, prayers that have gone unanswered for thousands of years, will now be answered in a moment's time.

In the Old Testament Temple, the altar of incense was found in the holy place, outside the Holy of Holies. It was a place where that incense was lit and continued to be kept lit constantly. In fact, there were certain priests that were assigned to just keep the incense lit. You might remember in Luke 1 that Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, that was his job the week that he met with the angel and was told about having a son in his later age, and then he had that interesting discussion with him. Look at chapter 8, here. Just flip ahead one or two pages to chapter 8:1, where we read these words, "When He opened the seventh seal, there was silence

in heaven for about half an hour. And I saw the seven angels who stand before God, and to them were given seven trumpets. Then another angel, having a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all the saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended before God from the angel's hand. Then the angel took the censer, filled it with fire from the altar, and threw it to the earth. And there were noises, thunderings, lightnings, and an earthquake. So the seven angels who had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." But again it is the cry of the church, the prayers of the saints, "Lord, bring justice, bring deliverance. When will You fix what's broken? How long will You wait?" And all those prayers were not lost. The Lord has a perfect time for them, and this is now the time. He was going to come and will come.

Notice, as we hit the deck with gold bowls representing all of the prayers of the saints over the generations, that we, the church, have been given a new song. This is not the song of the living creatures; it's a song of those who can sing the song about being redeemed. And so it's a new song. Music is important to every culture. We sing at funerals and weddings and football games. We'll do a lot of singin' in heaven, and you know the words, and you'll know the tune, and I suspect, even if you have a lousy voice now, you'll have a good voice then.....which I'm kind of looking forward to. But the word "new" is not new in terms of recent or young; it's a word for unique or unprecedented or unused or unworn or uncommon or novel. It literally is a song that God gives to just the church. You're going to have a song that you can sing that only really belongs to you. Only the church is able to sing the song of redemption. You might remember what Peter wrote in chapter 1 of his little book, where he began in chapter 1:10 by saying, "Of this salvation" (that we are experiencing as the church) "the prophets have inquired and searched carefully, who prophesied of the grace that would come to you, searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ who was in them was indicating when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven - things which angels desire to look into." Your redemption, my redemption, very unique in God's plan: this substitutionary death, the blood that was shed, the Spirit being placed into our hearts, the born again experience. I suspect we will be singing with choked voices and tears in our eyes. I can't imagine anything else.

Let me read to you - and you don't have to turn there, but I'll read to you real quick - a psalm out of the Old Testament, Psalm 96. It's an interesting psalm because it's repeated twice in the Bible. It is written once in 1 Chronicles 16; it is written again as Psalm 96. It was written by David when he had successfully brought the ark and placed it back in the place in the tabernacle. Finally, the LORD gathered in His place. And David writes of one day the LORD bringing judgment and worshipping Him for it. But here - it's just a few verses. I'm sure we have time here. Let me just read it to you real quick. This is what he wrote, "Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! Sing to the LORD, all the earth. Sing to the LORD, bless His name; proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the LORD is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are idols, but the LORD made the heavens. Honor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Give to the LORD, O families of the peoples, give to the LORD glory and strength. Give to the LORD the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come into His courts. Oh, worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations, 'The LORD reigns; the world also is firmly established, it shall not be moved; He shall judge the peoples righteously.' Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD. For He is coming, for He is coming to judge the earth. He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with His truth." It's 1000 B.C. Now we're in 2000 A.D. Can't wait. Can't wait. Jesus, who had suffered, is now glorified by the fruit of His suffering. That's the church. Right? "You have redeemed us to God by Your blood" (Revelation 5:9). In heaven, we're going to sing of the cross and the blood that was shed. Our communion services, I think, are just rehearsals for heaven. "Worthy is the Lamb" is still being sung. Yet this song is very unique to you. By the time we get to chapter 14 of Revelation, we will run into the 144,000. Actually we'll run into them very quickly here in a couple of weeks. But we'll run into them again in chapter 14, and they will be given a song that only they can sing. It is unique to them; it isn't to be sung by you. In fact, it'll be performed by them to you.

But here is our song. This is our song, "You are worthy, You were slain, redeemed us to God by Your blood." "We've been bought with a price. We don't belong to ourselves; so glorify God in your body and your spirit which belong to Him" (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). "We're not redeemed by corruptible things, like silver or gold, from our aimless conduct received by tradition from our fathers, but with

the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). A bloodless gospel is no gospel at all. "Without the shedding of blood there's no forgiveness of sin" (Hebrews 9:22). Paul will say to the Ephesian elders, in chapter 20:28 of Acts, "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood."

So here in heaven the church bows before the throne of the Lord, and it sings of His redemption while the Antichrist has not even yet been revealed. And we're in heaven, singin' about Jesus Christ. People often ask with their study in Revelation, "Do you think we'll know who the Antichrist is?" And every year five new books come out to tell you who he is, and I didn't buy any of them because I'm more interested in goin' to heaven. I don't really care who he is. I just care that I'm not gonna be here when he pops his ugly head up. We're gonna be gone. We're gonna be here, too busy in heaven worshipping the Lord to pay any attention to anyone but our God. Which is why I think Jesus said, there in Luke 21:36, "Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." I want to be sure that I'm there. I don't want to be here.

So I kidded with you a couple weeks ago, but learn this song would you please. I know you don't know the tune yet, but you should know the words. There won't be screens (overhead screens) like that (Laughing). I'm always interested when we sing a song, and the screens go out. People go.....(Pastor Jack is looking around) "How am I supposed to sing? I don't see any words at all." Learn the words. How hard is it to remember ten words? I'll bet you all know the words to "American Pie." (Laughing) Don't you? In fact, I was in Israel a couple of years ago and we had to drive all the way.....I forget where we were going.....Beersheba. It was an 80-mile drive. So I took out my phone. I have "American Pie" on it. I pushed it, and I played it (Pastor Jack laughs) through the.....do you remember this Gerard?microphone in the bus. Everyone sang every word. (Laughing) And I thought, "See? You can remember stuff if you want." So go and remember this. Would you just go remember this? It'd be so embarrassing if you have your Morningstar shirt on and you didn't know this song. (Laughing) Just be a shame. "You've redeemed us by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation." The gospel works everywhere the same way. I know one of the things that you will be taught in Bible school is to learn cultures and languages, and different cultures have different outlooks. And all of that is good. But you should know this: the gospel

works everywhere. It doesn't change. People are lost, they're sinful, they know it, and they need a Savior. "Oh, I don't know if I could be ready for the mission field." If you can just know your Bible, you'll be just fine. So the gospel is universal in its appeal. But understand this: so is the judgment of God. And if you go to chapter 11:9, you'll read there, or the lies of the Antichrist in chapter 13 - it appeals to the whole world as well. Jesus said to His disciples, "Go into all the world, make disciples of all the nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). But, "Go into all the world. Take the gospel to everyone." By the way, when we get to chapter 14, there's going to be this everlasting angel flying through the skies, preaching in every language. There's a movement, and it's been around for a long time, in the church, where they say, "Well, the Lord can't come back because the church hasn't reached the world yet." Yeah, that's baloney. The church is probably not going to be able to reach the world. We should try. But we're gonna fail. But the everlasting angel won't fail. He's pretty cool, man. He flies fast, he talks quick. (Laughing) He has the message. He's going to get lots of results. I'm looking forward to talking with you about him. He's pretty cool in the Bible.

What's going to happen? We're going to be kings and priests and reign with Jesus upon the earth. That is a promise made only to the church. We'll be returning with Him at His second coming. Revelation 19:11-14, "I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called the Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses." That's you. So not only learn the song, learn to ride a horse. No, I think you'll probably be okay. (Laughing) "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done" will be fully accomplished.

Verse 11, "Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice: 'Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!' And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: 'Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!' Then the four living creatures said,

'Amen!' And" (the church) "the twenty-four elders fell down" (here we go again) "and worshipped Him who lives forever and ever." Worship begins to ring out in every corner. I really think that verse 13 is probably John's view that the Lord gives him to the very end because now we have everyone on the earth worshipping Him, and that's certainly not the case at this point, chronologically. So I think John is given kind of a future view, if you will, a look ahead; that time where Paul wrote to the Philippians in chapter 2:9-11 that it was coming when "every knee would bow and every tongue would confess, every tongue would say Jesus is the Lord, to the glory of the Father." I think John sees that in verse 13. He sees the outgrowth of it, if you will, how awesome will that day be when nothing is yet to resist.

But in verse 11 John looked around, and he heard the voice of the angels around the throne, and the created worship angels and the church itself, and then he gives us a number: ten thousand times ten thousand; 10,000, by the way, is the largest number in Greek, so what you usually run into when you want to get multiple numbers. If you do the calculation, you'd have 100,000,000 and millions more. The point is there seems to be an incalculable number of angels and the church, represented by the elders, giving honor to the Lord for His sacrifice and worthiness and just acknowledging who He is.

We read, in verse 13, that even the creation of God joins in. Maybe the animals and the rocks. Why not? He's worthy. And notice that to Jesus and the Father the same glory is given because there's only one true God. So the living creatures say, "Amen!" So be it. There's an amen corner in heaven, and the church does what it does a lot: it hits the deck, worshipping.

Well that's it for heaven. That's it for our glance and our time spent around God's throne, what we get to learn and know and look forward to. And, like I said, after chapter 3, it's all about the future. So this is for you, so you can look forward to what's coming. But there's a whole lot more. Chapters 6-18 is that the world can look forward to what they're going to face when our God, who is the LORD, has had enough, His patience is finished, His time of grace (in that regard) is finished. Oh, He'll extend mercy to many still, but this is the beginning of the end - in chapter 6.

God has given to every man the ability to decide about Christ. If, indeed, He is the Lamb slain for our sins, then you should receive Him. You should look to Him. Your hope should be centered upon Him. He's the One, the Bible says, stands knocking

at the door (Revelation 3:20). You should worship Him for He has delivered you by His blood. He gave His life so that you could live. If not, then you will meet Him in judgment, and you'll be forced to admit that you were wrong, and He was right. But then it'll be too late. To reject Jesus now is to head into eternity alone and separated from God with the full knowledge of what it might have been like had you just done something else. But our Kinsman-Redeemer has come. God is longsuffering, but the signs of the times would say we're sneakin' up on this time when He's about to speak, and the Lamb is about to roar like a Lion. Can't wait. But if we wait, let's be busy to get the word out because Jesus died for every man. Amen? (Congregation responds, "Amen.") Let's pray together.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson
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